



PSSB Weekly Highlights

- The *Heard Across Montana* (HAM) newsletter is moving to a **bi-weekly** publication schedule, meaning that it will be published every other Friday. **So, you may expect your next issue on Fri., Sept. 23.**
- The Richland County Public Safety Communications System Manager position has been re-posted on the Sidney Job Service site at this link: <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/sidney/>. Starting salary is \$64,000 plus benefits. The position is open until filled.
- The National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) recently released a *Mission Critical Voice Communications Requirements for Public Safety* document to provide a common understanding of the meaning of and multiple requirements of "mission critical voice" over any type of network, including broadband. For more information, visit: <http://www.npstc.org/>.

What is an Equipment Transfer Letter?

By E Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

An Equipment Transfer letter is the formal paperwork used by Montana's Dept. of Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) to officially transfer federal grant-funded property, such as a communications site, a dispatch console, a repeater, or even radio flash upgrade hardware/software, to a jurisdiction. The jurisdiction could be a fire department, a county, a tribal government or a state agency.

As part of the process to appropriately close out the Interoperability Montana (IM) project, several of these letters have been sent to jurisdictions across the state in recent months. DES and the federal government require this documentation.

Previously, the IM Project and/or DES used to simply issue an "award letter," which awarded the equipment to a legal entity and provided written approval to proceed with the purchase and installation of the equipment. The award letter typically spelled out the conditions of the grant

award, with details of actions to be taken, how invoices and packing slips should be handled, and agreements to adhere to FEMA's Grant Assurances and Certifications document for sub-grantees. The award letters also stated that the sub-grantee will abide by technical and administrative policies and procedures in accordance with governance for the statewide radio system. Those award letters had to be signed by a legal representative of the jurisdiction, such as a county commissioner, tribal council member, or fire department board chair.

Now, in order to close out grants on behalf of the IM Project, jurisdictions are being issued "Notice of Project Completion and Equipment Transfer" letters that also need to be signed by a legal representative of the entity to indicate that the jurisdiction has taken formal ownership of the equipment transfer that was funded with Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) or Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) grant funds.

These letters reiterate the agreements outlined in the original award letters and also indicate that the jurisdiction will insure the equipment and place it in its inventory. The letters should be signed and returned within 10 days of receipt.

For grant and tax requirements, it is essential that this documentation be completed as soon as possible. Jurisdictions are responsible for maintaining equipment that has been awarded or transferred to them. This is a system of systems intended for cooperative use.

"When equipment is not being maintained, it could affect other local jurisdictions and put first responders at risk," said Scott Bradford, Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB) Communication Technology Manager.

PSSB is continuing to assist in the close out of all legal and technical matters related to the dissolution of the IM and is also supporting the efforts of the newly formed Statewide Radio Executive Transition Team in the re-obligation of federal grants.

Broadband's Role in Public Safety and National Security

By Chad Hultin chultin@mt.gov

Safety and security are vital to America's prosperity. Communication, information and the ability to respond have always been and will continue to be the bedrock of public safety and

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security. To help Montana evolve and lead the nation, broadband planning and investment will need to be a critical component of public safety and homeland security as we advance into the twenty-first century.

The utilization of broadband and broadband technologies will give first responders new tools to protect property and save lives. Through high-speed transmission of services such as data, voice and video, public safety personnel can be notified about emergencies and communicate and respond swiftly when they occur. These services will also provide the public with new ways of calling for help and receiving emergency information.

Traditional Land Mobile Radio (LMR) communications systems will continue to play an important role in the immediate future, providing mission-critical voice communications to first responders; however, broadband will have more and more importance as local and state law enforcement agencies become increasingly reliant on broadband-based communication systems. With a nationwide and state public safety broadband wireless network, first responders will be able to send and receive video and data in moments, enhancing situational awareness and improving their ability to communicate with each other and the public, which is so important in rural Montana.

With the use of broadband, public safety entities will be able to access medical records, site information and other video and data information useful for emergency responses. Broadband will also improve the nation's current 9-1-1 system by establishing the foundation for the transmission of voice, data or video to Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) during emergency phone calls. A cutting-edge public safety communications system will use broadband technologies to reduce threats to e-commerce and other Internet-based applications by ensuring the security of the nation's broadband networks.



Montana Broadband Coverage Map available at <http://www.broadband.mt.gov>

The current Montana Broadband Program is a large and significant undertaking that has required—and will continue to require—vision, planning, management, technical expertise and financial resources. In true Montana “Big Sky” fashion, the

program welcomes this federal initiative and is working with public and private sectors to bring broadband into focus, helping shape, improve and prosper all its citizens and break through the digital divide. For more information, please visit: <http://www.broadband.mt.gov>.

Broadband Program Plans Regional Meetings

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Montana Broadband Program is facilitating regional discussions about broadband around Montana. These discussions will help expand community visions, disseminate technical information about the availability of broadband access, and assist communities in determining what types of broadband services they would like to have.

The meetings are open to the public and will be attended by stakeholders from Montana communities that have an interest in the development of broadband services as they relate to such areas as public safety, healthcare, education, emergency services, business development and establishing jobs in Montana. See the Upcoming Meetings section of this newsletter below for regional meetings in your area.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Thurs., Sept. 15: I-15/90 Corridor Consortium**
Butte • 10:00 am - noon
Butte Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St.
- **Mon., Sept. 19: Regional Broadband Meeting**
In partnership with: Southeastern Montana Development Corporation
Miles City • 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Miles Community College, Room #106
2715 Dickinson Street
- **Tues., Sept. 20: Regional Broadband Meeting**
In partnership with: Eastern Plains Economic Development Council
Glendive • 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Dawson County Courthouse, 207 W Bell Street
- **Wed., Sept. 21: Regional Broadband Meeting**
In partnership with: Eastern Plains Economic Development Council
Thee Garage, 19 W. Montana Ave
- **Thurs., Sept. 22: Regional Broadband Meeting**
In partnership with: Great Northern Development Corporation
Wolf Point • 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
233 Cascade Street